

## DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 235 849

JC 830 464

TITLE Two Reports of the Eastland Survey: A Stratified Random Sample Study of Registered Voters of California, July, 1983.

INSTITUTION California Association of Community Colleges, Sacramento.

PUB DATE Aug 83

NOTE 76p.

PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC04 Plus Postage.

DESCRIPTORS College Attendance; College Role; \*Community Colleges; Educational Quality; Enrollment Influences; Governance; Participant Satisfaction; \*Public Opinion; \*School Support; State Surveys; Two Year Colleges; Two Year College Students

IDENTIFIERS \*California

## ABSTRACT

A telephone survey of 1,500 registered voters in California was conducted to determine perceptions of California's community colleges; members and attitudes of the two-year college student community; views of college funding, finances, budgets, and policy control; unemployed residents' views of the community colleges; and media habits. Study findings revealed: (1) respondents felt the major purposes of community colleges to be job/career development, improvement of basic skills, and preparation for transfer to a four-year institution; (2) 49% of all adults had attended at least one class at a community college; (3) 67% of the respondents felt that more money should be spent on higher education; (4) over 70% opted for local rather than state policy control; and (5) 12% of the households interviewed had one or more unemployed members; and, of those unemployed persons seeking re-employment, half expected to look to their local community college for all or part of their skill training. In addition to the detailed study report, which analyzes findings by respondent group and contrasts results with a 1979 survey, a news release and a summary report are included.

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TWO REPORTS OF THE EASTLAND SURVEY

A Stratified Random Sample Study  
of  
Registered Voters of California  
July, 1983

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is a summary of the analysis of responses to a study of 1,500 registered voters in California interviewed over a 13 evening period ending July 15, 1983. This telephone survey was conducted using a stratified random sample drawn by county, zip code and Census Tract to accurately reflect each of these jurisdictions. Additionally, by reflecting an overall three percent margin of error (in 95 out of 100 samples), the study was of respondents 53 percent of whom were female and 47 percent of whom were male. This is well within the overall margin of error necessary to establish the internal validity of the study.

The study covered six major topic areas:

- \* A rating of respondent perceptions of community colleges in California
- \* Respondents' views on student community questions
- \* Perceptions regarding funding, finance and budget for community colleges
- \* Views on community college policy control
- \* The role of community colleges relative to unemployed persons
- \* A media rating

The total number of questions for the educational study was 72 including index variables and post-coded questions. The highlights are as follows:

Community College Rating

California's community colleges were rated along with the University of California and the California State University systems. Overall, the major differences among the three systems were seen in the "degree of excellence" area. For, while none of the three systems received unusually high "below average" or "poor" marks, there was wide divergence on the "excellent" ratings from 40 percent (University of California) to 15 percent (California State University) and 12 percent (California's community colleges.)

This would tend to indicate a wide degree of acceptance of all three systems, but a considerable difference in the perceived level of excellence.

Additionally, respondents were asked to rate seven stated purposes of community colleges. The results (in order) were:

1. Jobs and career development
2. Improvement of basic skills

3. Transfer to a four-year institution
4. Obtain a general education
5. Provide community support services (day-care, etc.)
6. Continuing education
7. Teach special interest subjects

On the other hand, respondents were also asked to rate the actual job performance of community colleges in these seven areas. The results (in order) are:

1. Job and career development
2. Transfer to a four-year institution
3. Teach special interest subjects
4. Obtain a general education
4. Continuing education (tied with #4 above)
6. Provide community support services
7. Improvement of basic skills

Of the three most appropriate purposes of community colleges according to respondents, the only one that is considered below its proper level in terms of actual job performance is "improvement of basic skills."

The "quality of instruction" is considered "good". And, this rating improves among those who have already attended a class at a community college.

#### The Student Community

Our study found that almost half (49 percent) of all adults in California have attended at least one class at a community college. In addition, seven percent of California's households (of registered voters) have at least one member of that household currently enrolled in at least one class at a community college.

In those households which have a high school junior or senior at home, 41 percent of those high school who are planning on attending a California community college within the next two years. This suggests that the high school student of today will continue to be a large factor in community college planning. Additionally, the main reasons for this decision by today's high school students are:

1. Cost
2. Good basic education
3. Proximity to home

On the other hand, there are several reasons why other of California's college bound youth are not planning on attending a community college. The most mentioned are:

1. A perceived lack of standards
2. The desire for a large university
3. A desire for a wider variety of classes
4. The appeal of a private school

The majority of people who attend a community college class do so part-time, and for a variety of reasons. And, although more people do so (on a three part scale) for vocational or professional reasons (39 percent), a good number also do so for personal enrichment (36 percent) and because of a desire to transfer to a four-year institution (25 percent.)

On the question of academic credit, it is important to note that almost seven out of ten respondents (68 percent) said that it was important to them that they receive academic credit for their work.

#### Funding, Finance and Budget

In perspective, although only three percent of respondents named "education" as the most important problem facing America

today, 10 percent named it as the most important problem facing the State of California. This ranks it among the four most important problems named (unaided) by California adults facing their state today outdistancing such media-oriented issues as crime, illegal aliens, pollution/environment and nuclear power.

In concert with these findings, when asked about spending more on higher education, 24 percent of all respondents "strongly agreed" and an additional 43 percent "agreed". This is strong evidence of support.

Taking another view, in response to a specific question regarding community colleges, only six percent say California funding for community colleges is "too much", while 38 percent say "not enough" is being spent. This tends to confirm the above findings of widespread support for the stewardship of community colleges' financial management along with a recommendation for more funding.

#### Policy Control

Three separate questions were asked in three different places in the questionnaire about local control using different measurement techniques and languages. In each case, over 70 percent of all respondents opted for local policy control.

### The Unemployed

Twelve percent of the households interviewed have one or more persons living there who is unemployed who previously had full-time employment. Nearly half of this unemployment was identified with the current economic downturn and its consequences. This nearly doubled for Hispanics.

Only one-third of the respondents felt it was "likely" or "very likely" that they would be re-employed either in their profession or at their previous place of employment. And, in searching for re-employment, half of the respondents expect to look to their local community college for all or part of their re-employment knowledge and skill training.

This means that although there is reason for pessimism concerning the overall re-employment picture, the role of the community colleges will be crucial in one out of every two cases. This places a great burden of responsibility on the community colleges in this area.

### The Media

The media habits of respondents was studied (television news, radio and newspaper.) This study will guide the reader to

the media most likely to have the best audience(s). This should be used as a guide for public service announcements, promotional materials and advance briefings when an institution has a good media story which will attract attention to the institution.

## ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

### Community College Rating

For basis of comparison, California's three college and university systems were rated on the same scale based on "the quality of education" the respondent thought "a person receives at each." Table I shows the results for all three institutions.

TABLE I

### RATING CALIFORNIA'S COLLEGES

|                                       | <u>Exc</u> | <u>Abv</u><br><u>Avg</u> | <u>Avg</u> | <u>Blw</u><br><u>Avg</u> | <u>Poor</u> | <u>DK</u> |
|---------------------------------------|------------|--------------------------|------------|--------------------------|-------------|-----------|
| University of California              | 40         | 33                       | 12         | 2                        | 1           | 12        |
| California State<br>University System | 15         | 42                       | 26         | 2                        | 2           | 14        |
| Community Colleges                    | 12         | 31                       | 36         | 7                        | 4           | 11        |

As shown, there is relatively little difference among the three institutions in the most negative category ("poor"), but in the

most positive category ("excellent") the differences are noteworthy. This suggests a perception of each institution which probably differs little from the emphasis traditionally placed by each institution on its marketing. If one were to characterize this in the same way institutions grade students, one would say that the University of California receives an "A", the California State University system a "B" and the community colleges a "C".

This "C" grade improves to a strong "B" among respondents who have attended a community college (as shown in Table II.)

TABLE II

RATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE EDUCATION BY HAVE ATTENDED

| <u>Category</u> | <u>Yes</u> | <u>No</u> | <u>Don't Know</u> |
|-----------------|------------|-----------|-------------------|
| Excellent       | 14         | 10        | 20                |
| Above Average   | 35         | 27        | 20                |
| Average         | 36         | 37        | 0                 |
| Below Average   | 6          | 7         | 20                |
| Poor            | 3          | 4         | 20                |
| Don't Know      | <u>7</u>   | <u>15</u> | <u>20</u>         |
| TOTAL           | 101        | 100       | 100               |

In comparison with those who have not attended a community college, respondents who have attended a community college are four percent more likely to rate the quality of education one receives as "excellent" and eight percent more likely to rate the quality of education as "good". Conversely, respondents who have not attended a community college are more than twice as likely to have "no opinion" about quality of education. This means that the major difference is in the positive categories which improve as knowledge about the institutions improve.

Additionally, there is a direct relationship between age and the rating of community colleges. As seen by Table III (see page 12), the best marks for community colleges comes among respondents between the ages of 35 and 49. Here, exactly one-half of respondents rate the quality of education as either "excellent" or "good." This drops off on either side of the age scale to a low of 36 percent among 18 to 24 year olds, and 39 percent among respondents 65 years of age or older.

Conversely, when looking at "below average" or "poor", the only age group which shows a markedly lower rating than the others is among respondents 18 to 24. Among this group, seven percent more respondents gave this low rating than among the others. This is potentially harmful in that these are the people who

are just now moving into the community college market age. They are the prime potential students. Considerably more must be done to attract these students.

TABLE III

RATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE EDUCATION VS. AGE

| <u>Category</u> | <u>18-24</u> | <u>25-34</u> | <u>35-49</u> | <u>50-64</u> | <u>65+</u> |
|-----------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------|
|                 | %            | %            | %            | %            | %          |
| Excellent       | 9            | 13           | 12           | 12           | 11         |
| Above Average   | 27           | 29           | 38           | 30           | 28         |
| Average         | 40           | 39           | 35           | 36           | 30         |
| Below Average   | 12           | 9            | 4            | 6            | 4          |
| Poor            | 5            | 2            | 3            | 4            | 6          |
| Don't Know      | <u>6</u>     | <u>9</u>     | <u>9</u>     | <u>12</u>    | <u>22</u>  |
| TOTAL           | 99           | 101          | 101          | 100          | 101        |

### Rating Seven Purposes

A 1979 Field Research Corporation study of California on community college questions provides a good comparison for several of the concepts which needed to be tested in this study. Where possible, the exact wording of this earlier study was used. Thus, this study followed the Field study in testing seven statements of purpose for community colleges to test respondents' view of each. Unlike the Field study, however, which asked respondents to rate how "important" each function (based on the statement) was, here it was felt that a more accurate gauge for our purposes could be found by asking respondents to rate how "appropriate" each one was. Since half of the respondents had never gone to a community college in the Field study (and as later shown to be the case in this study), no category was felt to be important to those respondents. But, it was felt that each could rate how appropriate the function was.

With this in mind, each of the seven statements was tested. Table IV (see page 14) shows the results of this series of statements along with the median average for each statement. In each case, no more than 11 percent -- or one in ten respondents -- rejected the stated purpose as "not at all appropriate."

The clear concensus among respondents is that it is most appropriate for community colleges to provide "instruction or

TABLE IV

PURPOSES OF CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES

| <u>Category</u>                                       | <u>Vry</u><br><u>App</u><br><u>%</u> | <u>App</u><br><u>%</u> | <u>Not Vry</u><br><u>App</u><br><u>%</u> | <u>Not at all</u><br><u>App</u><br><u>%</u> | <u>DK</u><br><u>%</u> | <u>Median</u><br><u>%</u> |
|-------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| I. Job and career                                     | 52                                   | 27                     | 17                                       | 4                                           | 5                     | 1.65                      |
| II. Academic=transfer<br>to 4-year college            | 30                                   | 43                     | 15                                       | 6                                           | 6                     | 1.97                      |
| III. General interest<br>education                    | 37                                   | 34                     | 14                                       | 11                                          | 5                     | 1.99                      |
| IV. Improve basic<br>skills                           | 34                                   | 41                     | 14                                       | 6                                           | 5                     | 1.92                      |
| V. Continuing education                               | 21                                   | 45                     | 16                                       | 10                                          | 8                     | 2.16                      |
| VI. Support services to<br>communities                | 22                                   | 47                     | 16                                       | 9                                           | 7                     | 2.13                      |
| VII. Special interest,<br>culture and recre-<br>ation | 7                                    | 44                     | 27                                       | 7                                           | 15                    | 2.40                      |

training which enables students to qualify for jobs, to move up on their jobs or to train for another career." Over one-half

(52 percent) of all respondents find this "very appropriate."

Next comes helping students improve basic skills followed by providing an education that will allow students to transfer to a four-year institution.

The only statement which is unusually lower than the others is "to provide the community with special interests, cultural or recreational programs." Only seven percent found this to be a "very appropriate" use of community colleges. And, just one-third of all respondents (34 percent) expressed that this is a "not very appropriate" or "not at all appropriate" purpose of community colleges. Even here, however, a majority still agrees with the purpose as "appropriate" or "very appropriate."

It is interesting to compare this to the results of the 1979 Field study. (Care must be taken, however, since only the "mean average" was given for the earlier figures in the published study. Thus, while the statistics may not be comparable, the rankings and distances between and among statistical notations can be made.)

On a comparison basis, it would appear that job and career training has not moved from first place as the most "appropriate"

or (Field study) "important" purpose of community colleges.  
Table V suggests, in fact, that whether important or appropriate,

TABLE V

COMPARISON OF PURPOSES: 1983 STUDY ("APPROPRIATE") VS.  
1979 FIELD STUDY ("IMPORTANT")

| <u>Category</u>                             | <u>Median<br/>1983</u> | <u>Mean<br/>1979</u> |
|---------------------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| I. Jobs and career                          | 2.35                   | 2.83                 |
| II. Academic==Transfer to<br>4-year college | 2.03                   | 2.75                 |
| III. General education                      | 2.01                   | 2.45                 |
| IV. Improve basic skills                    | 2.08                   | 2.69                 |
| V. Continuing education                     | 1.84                   | 2.51                 |
| VI. Support Services                        | 1.87                   | 2.39                 |
| VII. Special Interest                       | 1.60                   | 2.21                 |

respondents have not changed their minds between what the  
three most likely choices ought to be, and what the four  
remaining choices ought to be.

This is shown more clearly by Table VI below, where just the categories are rank ordered,

TABLE VI

RANKING OF PURPOSES=1979-1983 COMPARISON\*

| <u>1983</u>                            | <u>1979</u>                            |
|----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| 1. Jobs and career                     | 1. Jobs and career                     |
| 2. Improve basic skills                | 2. Academic=transfer to 4-year college |
| 3. Academic=transfer to 4-year college | 3. Improve basic skills                |
| 4. General education                   | 4. Continuing education                |
| 5. Support services                    | 5. General education                   |
| 6. Continuing education                | 6. Support services                    |
| 7. Special interest                    | 7. Special interest                    |

\*1979 = Important  
1983 = Appropriate

As Field correctly noted, it is insufficient to simply rank how important (or how appropriate) each function ought to be. The other side must also be accounted for: how good a job community colleges are doing in each of these seven function areas as well.

A comparison of Tables IV (page 14) and Table VII (see page 19) shows some striking differences except in the job and career statement:

- \* Where 52 percent rate job and career training as being "very appropriate", 48 percent rate community colleges "excellent" in this area.
- \* Where 30 percent rate academic transferability as "very appropriate", only 12 percent rate community colleges "excellent" in this area.
- \* Where 37 percent rate general interest education "very appropriate", only eight percent rate community colleges "excellent" in this area.
- \* Where 34 percent rate improvement of basic skills "very appropriate", only nine percent rate community colleges "excellent" in this area.

TABLE VII

JOB PERFORMANCE OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES

| <u>Category</u>                                       | <u>Exc</u><br><u>4</u> | <u>Good</u><br><u>3</u> | <u>Fair</u><br><u>2</u> | <u>Poor</u><br><u>1</u> | <u>DK</u> | <u>Median</u> |
|-------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-----------|---------------|
| I. Job and career                                     | 48                     | 33                      | 10                      | 4                       | 5         | 3.32          |
| II. Academic=transfer<br>to 4-year college            | 12                     | 43                      | 26                      | 6                       | 13        | 2.70          |
| III. General interest<br>education                    | 8                      | 39                      | 28                      | 9                       | 16        | 2.55          |
| IV. Improve basic<br>skills                           | 9                      | 35                      | 26                      | 13                      | 17        | 2.48          |
| V. Continuing education                               | 15                     | 39                      | 25                      | 7                       | 13        | 2.55          |
| VI. Support services                                  | 7                      | 35                      | 28                      | 9                       | 21        | 2.53          |
| VII. Special interest,<br>culture and recre-<br>ation | 10                     | 40                      | 26                      | 7                       | 17        | 2.64          |

- \* Where 21 percent rate continuing education "very appropriate", only 15 percent rate community colleges "excellent" in this area.
- \* Where 22 percent rate the provision of community support services as "very appropriate", only seven percent rate community colleges "excellent" in this area.
- \* And, finally, where seven percent rate special interest, cultural and recreational programs "very appropriate", an almost equal 10 percent rate community colleges "excellent" in this area.

The seven statements are also compared with the earlier Field study results for ranking and statistical differences. As demonstrated in Tables VIII and IX, job and career job performance has moved from third to first place. This must be viewed as positive news, since this is also the most appropriate area according to respondents. (See Table VIII on page 21 and Table IX on page 22.)

The provision of basic skills, however, which was second only to jobs and career training in both importance and appropriateness, has dropped to last place from 1979 to 1983. This is a clear indication that this highly important area is either

not being properly addressed or the results are not being properly marketed to the California adult population.

TABLE VIII

COMPARISON OF JOB PERFORMANCE = 1983-1979

| <u>Category</u>                            | <u>Median<br/>1983</u> | <u>Mean<br/>1979</u> |
|--------------------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| I. Job and Career                          | 3.32                   | 2.92                 |
| II. Academic=Transfer to<br>5-year college | 2.70                   | 2.99                 |
| III. General education                     | 2.55                   | 2.81                 |
| IV. Basic skills                           | 2.48                   | 2.63                 |
| V. Continuing education                    | 2.55                   | 2.95                 |
| VI. Support services                       | 2.53                   | 2.62                 |
| VII. Special interest                      | 2.64                   | 2.76                 |

This is a particular concern given that community colleges rank lowest among 18 to 24 year olds (see Table III on page 12) among whom this concern is most important.

TABLE IX

RANKING OF JOB PERFORMANCE=1983-1979

| <u>1983</u>                            | <u>1979</u>                            |
|----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| 1. Job and career                      | 1. Academic=transfer to 4-year college |
| 2. Academic=transfer to 4-year college | 2. Continuing education                |
| 3. Special interest                    | 3. Job and career                      |
| 4. General education                   | 4. General education                   |
| 4. Continuing education                | 5. Special interest                    |
| 6. Support services                    | 6. Basic skills                        |
| 7. Basic skills                        | 7. Support services                    |

\* Tied

Quality of Instruction

Finally, in the area of community college rating, respondents were asked to rate the quality of instruction received at a community college. Table X shows the response to this question.

While the undecideds have moved from 1979 to 1983 in a downward direction, and "good" has increased seven percent during the same period, "excellent" has dropped five percent during the four years. This would normally be characterized as a "mixed blessing" of good and discouraging news.

TABLE X

QUALITY OF INSTRUCTION

| <u>Response</u> | <u>% of Total</u> |             |
|-----------------|-------------------|-------------|
|                 | <u>1983</u>       | <u>1979</u> |
| Excellent       | 17                | 22          |
| Good            | 52                | 45          |
| Fair            | 18                | 16          |
| Poor            | 3                 | 3           |
| Don't Know      | <u>10</u>         | <u>14</u>   |
| TOTAL           | 100               | 100         |

Among persons who have attended a community college class, however, the news is not as negative. Nearly one-fourth of all respondents in this category (22 percent) rated the quality of instruction "excellent" and an additional 53 percent rated it "good." This means that three-fourths give high marks to instructors at community colleges.

This means that almost twice as many people rate the instruction as "excellent" as rate the quality of education overall as "excellent" (see Tables XI and II respectively on pages 24 and 10.)

TABLE XI

RATE QUALITY OF INSTRUCTION VS.  
EVER ATTENDED A COMMUNITY COLLEGE

| <u>Category</u> | <u>Yes</u><br>% | <u>No</u><br>% |
|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Excellent       | 22              | 12             |
| Good            | 53              | 52             |
| Fair            | 17              | 19             |
| Poor            | 3               | 2              |
| No opinion      | <u>5</u>        | <u>15</u>      |
| TOTAL           | 100             | 100            |

The Student Community

The second major area of the study focuses on the question: who attends community colleges, and why do they do so? It begins by looking at enrollment, reasons for prospective enrollment (or reasons for not being a prospective student), and questions of academic credit.

Who Attends a Community College Class

Californians attend community college classes. The data would suggest that community colleges are an integral part of community life. Table XII shows a comparison between the Field data and our own to this question.

TABLE XII

EVER ATTENDED A CLASS AT A COMMUNITY COLLEGE

| <u>Response</u> | <u>% of Total</u> |             |
|-----------------|-------------------|-------------|
|                 | <u>1983</u>       | <u>1979</u> |
| Yes             | 49                | 47          |
| No              | <u>51</u>         | <u>53</u>   |
| TOTAL           | 100               | 100         |

As can be seen, the margin of difference is clearly within the necessary level of confidence to make the two studies comparable in this area. In both cases, almost half of the adult respondents -- and thus, half of California's adults -- have attended at least one class at a community college. The kinds of people who this represents are:

- \* More often technical workers (60 percent) than professional (52 percent), white collar (49 percent) or blue collar workers (47 percent) or homemakers (47 percent.)
- \* More often between 25 and 34 years of age (61 percent) than 18 - 24 (55 percent), 35 - 49 (50 percent), 50 - 64 (44 percent) or over 65 (31 percent.)
- \* Most often someone with vocational or some college education (66 percent.)
- \* Most often from a household earning between \$25,000 and \$49,999 per year (56 percent.)

So, while there is no group identified where an appreciable percent have not attended a community college class, it is a greater percentage of the above groups who make up the greater part of community college attendees.

Additionally, 15 percent of respondents classify themselves as currently enrolled in a community college course -- up from eight percent in 1979. (NOTE: it is possible that because the study was conducted in the summer months, the precision of this 15 percent may not be as exact as it should, causing a greater or lesser count than actual.)

TABLE XIII

CURRENTLY ENROLLED

| <u>Response</u> | <u>% of Total</u> |             |
|-----------------|-------------------|-------------|
|                 | <u>1983</u>       | <u>1979</u> |
| Yes             | 15                | 8           |
| No              | 84                | 92          |
| Refused         | <u>1</u>          | <u>-</u>    |
| TOTAL           | 100               | 100         |

Of those who do or have attended a class, 60 percent stated that their attendance was part-time. Of those who would like to attend a community college class in the future, 85 percent stated that their attendance would be part-time.

It is also important to know why students attend a community college. Table XIV shows the data to our question as well as responses to a multiple-coded question from the Field study. (Multiple-coded responses accounts for the 111 percent rather than 100 percent total.)

TABLE XIV

WHY ATTEND COMMUNITY COLLEGE

| <u>Response</u>            | <u>% of Total</u> |
|----------------------------|-------------------|
| Vocation or profession     | 39                |
| Transfer to 4-year college | 25                |
| Personal enrichment        | <u>36</u>         |
| TOTAL                      | 100               |

1979

|                                    |                |
|------------------------------------|----------------|
| Personal improvement or enrichment | 44             |
| Prepare for work                   | 32             |
| Degree/certificate                 | 29             |
| Basic skills                       | <u>6</u>       |
| TOTAL                              | 111 (multiple) |

Although it is beyond the scope of this study, it is possible that the difference in emphasis from 1979 to 1983 is related to the changes in economic conditions causing people to be more concerned about job and career (see Question #5 on the aggregate tables for rating of economic conditions in California today.) With or without this as an explanation, however, it is clear that a change has taken place in the intervening years causing more emphasis to be placed on jobs and careers and less on personal enrichment.

This emphasis on jobs and careers can be seen most clearly among the prime age group for community colleges: 25 to 34 year olds. Table XV displays the variance by age group in this three part question categories. (See Table XV, page 30.) Viewed from this perspective, one sees that:

- \* Job and vocation is most important to the 25 - 34 year olds.
- \* College (four-year) preparation is most important to 18 - 24 year olds.
- \* Vocation and personal enrichment are equally important to 35 - 49 year olds.
- \* Personal enrichment is most important to those fifty years old or older.

These are not unusual findings, but it is important to be reminded from those who attend what their goals and objectives are for attending community college class(es).

TABLE XV

REASON FOR ATTENDING A COMMUNITY COLLEGE VS. AGE

| <u>Category</u> | <u>18-24</u> | <u>25-34</u> | <u>35-49</u> | <u>50-64</u> | <u>65+</u> |
|-----------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------|
|                 | %            | %            | %            | %            | %          |
| Vocation        | 31           | 43           | 38           | 39           | 39         |
| College prep    | 45           | 29           | 24           | 14           | 8          |
| Enrichment      | 22           | 29           | 38           | 47           | 49         |
| Refused         | <u>2</u>     | <u>--</u>    | <u>1</u>     | <u>--</u>    | <u>3</u>   |
| TOTAL           | 100          | 101          | 101          | 100          | 99         |

Also, there is a marked difference between men and women in this same question response alternatives. Men are considerably more interested in vocation and job training and knowledge than in personal enrichment or college preparation. (See Table XVI, page 31.) Women, on the other hand, are equally concerned with vocation and with personal enrichment -- probably reflecting the dual role many women face between careers inside and outside the home.

TABLE XVI

REASON FOR ATTENDING COMMUNITY COLLEGE VS. SEX

| <u>Category</u> | <u>Female</u> | <u>Male</u> |
|-----------------|---------------|-------------|
|                 | <u>%</u>      | <u>%</u>    |
| Vocation        | 39            | 38          |
| College prep    | 22            | 28          |
| Enrichment      | 39            | 32          |
| Refused         | <u>--</u>     | <u>1</u>    |
| TOTAL           | 100           | 99          |

Academic Credit

Respondents were asked to state whether or not academic credit is important in the courses they take. The answer is most affirmatively "yes." By a 60 percent to 31 percent margin, respondents said it is important to receive academic credit along with the course they take. This, of course, must be examined in light of programming, instructor accreditation, and other academic criteria, (See Table XVII, page 32,) More study on this subject is advised,

TABLE XVII

IMPORTANT = ACADEMIC CREDIT

| <u>Category</u> | <u>% of Total</u> |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| Yes             | 68                |
| No              | 31                |
| Don't Know      | <u>1</u>          |
| TOTAL           | 100               |

High School-Aged Students

Twelve percent of the respondents said that there was at least one person living in his/her household who was "planning on attending a college or university in the next two years."

Of those who were planning on attending in the next two years, 86 percent stated a preference for one of the three California college or university systems. And as part of that 86 percent, 41 percent (or nearly half) named a California community college. These percentages are not meaningful unless accompanied by the reasons why or why not a community college. These two questions are answered and displayed in Tables XVIII and XIX

(back to back) on this page. Overall, the two tables suggest:

- \* Those who will go, do so for cost and basic education reasons.

TABLE XVIII

WHY HIGH SCHOOL AGE HOUSEHOLDER IS GOING  
TO A CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

| <u>Response</u>      | <u>% of Total</u> |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| Cost                 | 39                |
| Good basic education | 21                |
| Proximity to home    | 16                |

TABLE XIX

WHY HIGH SCHOOL AGE HOUSEHOLDER NOT GOING  
TO A CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

| <u>Response</u>        | <u>% of Total</u> |
|------------------------|-------------------|
| Lack of standards      | 21                |
| Likes large university | 17                |
| Not enough classes     | 11                |
| Prefers private school | 11                |

- \* Those who choose not to, will do so because of a perception of less than accepted standards, and class variety.

Finance, Funding and Budget

The question of budgeting for higher education by the State of California comes up early on the questionnaire (Question #7.) And, it provides a good contrast (Question #10) to respondents' views on current tax revenues in California. In fact, all questions concerning tax-based funding must be weighed against Californians continuing hostility toward tax increases.

The basic measure of tax vs. government revenues must be placed in the context of the period during which the interviewing took place: the final weeks of the heated and angry debate between the governor and the leaders of the legislature over the budget for state government. That debate centered on perceived inadequate revenues to meet budget requirements. It was a time most likely to engender sympathy for a larger budget.

The statement read to respondents was:

The total amount of tax revenue available to the State and local governments is not enough to meet the current costs of the various services which government at all levels is providing, and a tax increase at the local level is appropriate.

Based on the strong "local control" support for all other statements, it is instructive that respondents rejected even this

appeal for taxes at the local level. (See Table XX below.)

TABLE XX  
RAISING LOCAL TAXES IS APPROPRIATE

| <u>Response</u>       | <u>% of Total</u> |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Strongly agree        | 5                 |
| Agree                 | 38                |
| Disagree              | 35                |
| Strongly disagree     | 14                |
| Don't know/no opinion | 7                 |
|                       | <hr/>             |
| TOTAL                 | 99                |

It is in context of this response that the question of spending more on higher education emerges. The statement was: "California ought to be spending more on higher education; that is, post-high school education."

There was very strong support for this statement among respondents. Two out of three respondents either "agreed" or "strongly agreed." And, one out of four represented the "strongly agreed" category alone.

TABLE XXI

CALIFORNIA OUGHT TO SPEND MORE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

| <u>Response</u>       | <u>% of Total</u> |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Strongly agree        | 24                |
| Agree                 | 43                |
| Disagree              | 27                |
| Strongly disagree     | 3                 |
| Don't Know/No opinion | <u>3</u>          |
| TOTAL                 | 100               |

Moreover, the ratio of strong support to strong opposition was eight to one (8:1) in favor.

There is additional support in specific age and affiliation groups as well. Two of these can be seen by cross-tabulating this question by age and political party affiliation.

Looking (Table XXII) just at the "strongly agree" category by age, the direct support link as it incrementally declines as age increases is evident from 37 percent among 18 - 24 year olds to 21 percent beginning at age 50.

TABLE XXII

STATE SHOULD SPEND MORE ON HIGHER EDUCATION VS. AGE

| <u>Category</u>   | <u>18-24</u> | <u>25-34</u> | <u>35-49</u> | <u>50-64</u> | <u>65+</u> |
|-------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------|
|                   | <u>%</u>     | <u>%</u>     | <u>%</u>     | <u>%</u>     | <u>%</u>   |
| Strongly agree    | 37           | 23           | 20           | 21           | 22         |
| Agree             | 40           | 46           | 44           | 42           | 38         |
| Disagree          | 18           | 25           | 29           | 31           | 31         |
| Strongly disagree | 2            | 4            | 4            | 2            | 4          |
| Don't Know        | <u>3</u>     | <u>3</u>     | <u>3</u>     | <u>3</u>     | <u>5</u>   |
| TOTAL             | 100          | 101          | 100          | 99           | 100        |

And, while there is little "strongly disagree" evident in any age group, the same incremental growth of opposition shown in "disagree" is evident from 18 percent among 18 - 24 years old to 31 percent beginning at age 50.

And, in an unusual demonstration of political partisanship, the responses cross-tabulated by political party affiliation (shown in Table XXIII) shows Republicans at 58 percent "strongly agree"

TABLE XXIII

STATE SHOULD SPEND MORE ON HIGHER EDUCATION VS. POLITICAL PARTY

| <u>Category</u>   | <u>Republican</u> | <u>Democrat</u> | <u>Independent</u> |
|-------------------|-------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
|                   | %                 | %               | %                  |
| Strongly agree    | 21                | 26              | 26                 |
| Agree             | 37                | 47              | 44                 |
| Disagree          | 36                | 20              | 25                 |
| Strongly disagree | 4                 | 3               | 2                  |
| Don't Know        | <u>3</u>          | <u>4</u>        | <u>4</u>           |
| TOTAL             | 101               | 100             | 101                |

or "agree, but Democrats at 73 percent for the same categories. (Independents more closely identify with Democrats in this area at 70 percent.) This is capable of being a partisan issue.

Funding Adequacy for Community Colleges

There is immediate concern by community college administration(s) about current and future funding needs. In some cases needs are crucial. Therefore, we tested respondents' perceptions of the "adequacy" of the current funding for community colleges. Table XXIV shows the results.

TABLE XXIV

ADEQUACY OF FUNDING

| <u>Response</u>    | <u>% of Total</u> |
|--------------------|-------------------|
| Too much is spent  | 6                 |
| Right amount spent | 37                |
| Not enough spent   | 38                |
| Don't Know         | <u>19</u>         |
| TOTAL              | 100               |

Not only is the ratio of "too much is being spent" to "not enough is being spent" more than one to six (1 : 6), "not enough is being spent" virtually ties "right amount is being spent" among all respondents. And, as illustrated below, among those who have attended a community college class, these differences are even more pronounced.

TABLE XXV

RATE MONEY FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGES VS.  
EVER ATTENDED A COMMUNITY COLLEGE

| <u>Category</u> | <u>Yes</u> | <u>No</u> |
|-----------------|------------|-----------|
|                 | <u>%</u>   | <u>%</u>  |
| Too much        | 5          | 7         |
| Right amount    | 37         | 35        |
| Not enough      | 43         | 34        |
| Don't Know      | <u>16</u>  | <u>23</u> |
| TOTAL           | 101        | 99        |

Here, the ratio among attendees past or present was one to eight (1 : 8) between too much and not enough, and a six percent variance between right amount and not enough in favor of the latter, ("Don't know" was the prime factor in the non-attendees ratings,)

And finally in this category, although there is little difference between the responses to "too much is being spent" by age group of respondent, there is a direct line from 53 percent (18 to 24 year olds) to 24 percent among respondents 65 years or older to

TABLE XXVI

RATE AMOUNT OF MONEY VS. AGE

| <u>Category</u> | <u>18-24</u> | <u>25-34</u> | <u>35-49</u> | <u>50-64</u> | <u>65+</u> |
|-----------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------|
|                 | %            | %            | %            | %            | %          |
| Too much        | 5            | 3            | 6            | 8            | 10         |
| Right amount    | 30           | 39           | 37           | 36           | 40         |
| Not enough      | 53           | 40           | 39           | 35           | 24         |
| Don't Know      | <u>12</u>    | <u>19</u>    | <u>18</u>    | <u>22</u>    | <u>26</u>  |
| TOTAL           | 100          | 101          | 100          | 101          | 100        |

the statement that "not enough is being spent". Conversely, satisfaction with the amount that is now being spent on/by community colleges increases from 30 percent to 40 percent in these same groups (from youngest to oldest.) Additional funding would, perhaps, solve some of the concern by young people about diversity of classes evidenced on page 33.

Community College Use of Funds

The other side of the funding question is: how good a job the community colleges are doing with the funds they have (irrespective of whether or not it is enough.)

Larry Eastland and Associates again was able to use the language of, and compare results with, the 1979 Field study. This comparison is shown here as Table XXVII below.

TABLE XXVII

MONEY USE=HOW EFFECTIVE?

| <u>Response</u> | <u>% of Total</u> |             |
|-----------------|-------------------|-------------|
|                 | <u>1983</u>       | <u>1979</u> |
| Excellent       | 14                | 14          |
| Good            | 46                | 34          |
| Fair            | 20                | 26          |
| Poor            | 5                 | 6           |
| Don't Know      | <u>15</u>         | <u>20</u>   |
| TOTAL           | 100               | 100         |

The primary movement measured by this question asked in 1979 and 1983 is from the "don't know" and "fair" alternatives to the "good". This accounts for the 12 percent jump in that category. It shows a heightened level of awareness of community colleges and their funding base use.

The prime socio-demographic variable displaying a statistically significant variance is, again, age of the respondent. Where among the youngest group 68 percent responded "excellent" or "good", only 47 percent of those 65 years of age or older responded to these two positive ratings. And, among community colleges prime age group, the total was 62 percent positive.

TABLE XXVIII

RATE EFFECTIVE USE OF MONEY VS. AGE

| <u>Category</u> | <u>18-24</u> | <u>25-34</u> | <u>35-49</u> | <u>50-64</u> | <u>65+</u> |
|-----------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------|
|                 | %            | %            | %            | %            | %          |
| Excellent       | 17           | 13           | 15           | 11           | 14         |
| Good            | 51           | 49           | 50           | 45           | 33         |
| Fair            | 19           | 19           | 20           | 20           | 25         |
| Poor            | 5            | 5            | 3            | 7            | 6          |
| No opinion      | <u>7</u>     | <u>13</u>    | <u>13</u>    | <u>18</u>    | <u>22</u>  |
| TOTAL           | 99           | 99           | 101          | 101          | 100        |

Tuition Awareness

The current debate over tuition makes it timely to gauge the awareness of Californians over present tuition policies. Only

TABLE XXIX

AWARENESS OF TUITION STATUS

| <u>Response</u> | <u>1983</u><br>% of<br>Total | <u>1979</u><br>% of<br>Total |
|-----------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Tuition now     | 34                           | 26                           |
| No tuition      | 53                           | 56                           |
| Don't Know      | <u>12</u>                    | <u>19</u>                    |
| TOTAL           | 99                           | 101                          |

One third believe that tuition currently exists, while just over half recognize that there is no tuition. The data suggest that it does not matter whether it is called "tuition" or "fees", neither is particularly more of a problem than the other. (See questions #51 and 52.)

### Policy Control

Two basic questions were asked to establish respondent views regarding local vs. state control over community college educational policy. The first is a "push question", or, one which is worded strongly on one side so that the researcher can identify what percent of the respondents cannot be "pushed" into agreeing with the one attractive position offered. This helps, also, to identify hard opposition, or that which cannot be appealed to,

The statement was; "There ought to be more local control over our community colleges and less interference from Sacramento," The use of the term "local control" was used as the soft positive, and the use of the words "interference" and "Sacramento" (to bring up all the negative feelings about state government) were to reinforce selection of alternative one -- local control.

The results were (see Table XXX, page 47) that only 18 percent of all respondents could not be pushed. They chose "disagree" or "strongly disagree", while three out of four respondents chose the two positive counterparts. (There is no evidence that the remaining 74 percent had to be pushed, only that the question was designed to do so.)

The percent in opposition to the statement makes socio-demographic variance much smaller than if the categories were more evenly distributed.

TABLE XXX

LOCAL CONTROL VS. SACRAMENTO

| <u>Response</u>       | <u>% of Total</u> |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Strongly agree        | 16                |
| Agree                 | 58                |
| Disagree              | 16                |
| Strongly disagree     | 2                 |
| Don't Know/No opinion | <u>8</u>          |
| TOTAL                 | 100               |

The second question (asked much later in the questionnaire) concerned the importance attached by respondents to having their local community college policy determined by a locally-elected board rather than by the current system of a statewide board chosen by the governor.

There is an almost identical pattern of response to this question and the previously-cited one. (Table XXXI) In each case, just under two in ten rated each statement negatively, while the

TABLE XXXI

LOCAL CONTROL BY BOARD RATHER THAN STATE BOARD

| <u>Response</u>      | <u>% of Total</u> |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| Very important       | 34                |
| Important            | 40                |
| Not very important   | 11                |
| Not at all important | 8                 |
| Don't Know           | <u>7</u>          |
| TOTAL                | 100               |

positive alternatives have extremely strong support even without using the "push" mechanism. And, this becomes even more pronounced among respondents who have attended a class at a community college.

The so-called bottom line is that there is a great deal of support for the concept of local control of policy for community colleges, and not very much for state control.

TABLE XXXII

IMPORTANCE OF LOCAL CONTROL VS.  
EVER ATTENDED A COMMUNITY COLLEGE

| <u>Category</u>      | <u>Yes</u><br>% | <u>No</u><br>% |
|----------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Very Important       | 40              | 29             |
| Important            | 39              | 42             |
| Not very important   | 11              | 11             |
| Not at all important | 6               | 10             |
| Don't Know           | <u>5</u>        | <u>8</u>       |
| TOTAL                | 101             | 100            |

The strength of commitment to local control increases rather significantly with those who have attended a community college class. (Table XXXII.) There is an 11 percent jump in the "very important" category and an overall general positive movement coming primarily from lower categories rather than

from the "don't know" category. A good marketing effort would focus here on this issue.

In fact, the relationship between age of the respondent, prior or current attendance at a community college class and the substantive questions is evident throughout the study as prime relationships in almost every category. The reader should concentrate his/her efforts here in policy and marketing development.

Unemployment in California

The role of community colleges in relation to unemployed persons was examined. One must remember that, as a base, respondents felt that the prime role of community colleges today was in job

TABLE XXXIII

UNEMPLOYMENT IN CALIFORNIA

| <u>Response</u> | <u>% of Total</u> |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| Yes             | 12                |
| No              | <u>88</u>         |
| TOTAL           | 100               |

and career knowledge and skill training development.

With 12 percent of the households in California (Table XXXIII) having at least one person in that household who is unemployed but who was previously full-time employed, this is a serious task. Career re-training takes on added importance for the community colleges.

In addition, the percent unemployed by household almost doubles (from 10 percent to 19 percent) in Hispanic homes. This places an added trust with community colleges because of their traditional role in working with cultural disadvantaged.

TABLE XXXIV

UNEMPLOYED VS. GRANDPARENTS' LANGUAGE

| <u>Category</u> | <u>English</u> | <u>Spanish</u> | <u>Other</u> |
|-----------------|----------------|----------------|--------------|
|                 | %              | %              | %            |
| Yes             | 10             | 19             | 16           |
| No              | 89             | 81             | 84           |
| Don't Know      | <u>1</u>       | <u>0</u>       | <u>0</u>     |
| TOTAL           | 100            | 100            | 100          |

Table XXXV (page 53) shows the large role the current economic downturn is playing in this aspect of employment (NOTE: only previously fully employed persons are identified, not new entrants into the workforce). Nearly half of those that are unemployed in this group note the economy as the prime reason (41 percent.) Also, there is a surprisingly high level of disability-related unemployment (12 percent.)

TABLE XXXV

UNEMPLOYMENT = WHY

| <u>Response</u>    | <u>% of Total</u> |
|--------------------|-------------------|
| Economic decline   | 41                |
| Disability         | 12                |
| Quit               | 8                 |
| Cannot determine   | 6                 |
| Lack of child care | 4                 |
| Going to school    | 3                 |
| Prejudice          | 3                 |
| Lack of education  | 3                 |
| Fired              | 3                 |

The likelihood of re-employment either in the industry or the profession of the unemployed person is not good according to the persons themselves. Little more than one in three persons (37 percent) said it was "very likely" or "likely" that this would be the case.

TABLE XXXVI

LIKELIHOOD OF RE-EMPLOYMENT IN PROFESSION OR COMPANY

| <u>Response</u>   | <u>% of Total</u> |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| Very likely       | 17                |
| Likely            | 20                |
| Not very likely   | 25                |
| Not at all likely | 35                |
| Don't Know        | <u>4</u>          |
| TOTAL             | 101               |

An almost equally large percent (35 percent) said it is "not at all likely" that they would be able to receive such re-employment. This is a very pessimistic assessment of their employment opportunity under current conditions, and places a burden on support institutions.

Community colleges are one part of the re-tooling process that will be looked at by the unemployed. Table XXXVII shows that fully half of these Californians will be "very likely" or "likely" to look to community colleges for part or all of their new training and skill development.

TABLE XXXVII

LIKELIHOOD OF RETRAINING AT A COMMUNITY COLLEGE

| <u>Response</u>   | <u>% of Total</u> |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| Very Likely       | 34                |
| Likely            | 15                |
| Not very likely   | 19                |
| Not at all likely | 28                |
| Don't Know        | <u>5</u>          |
| TOTAL             | 101               |

The Media

This section -- although short -- ought not be overlooked in its importance for marketing and as a mechanism to "tell the community college story."

Radio

The following radio stations are most often listened to in California:

TABLE XXXVIII  
RADIO STATIONS

| <u>Station</u> | <u>% of TOTAL</u> |
|----------------|-------------------|
| KABC-AM        | 4                 |
| KBIG-FM        | 3                 |
| KCBS-AM        | 3                 |
| KNX-FM         | 2                 |
| KROQ-FM        | 2                 |
| KFWB-AM        | 2                 |
| KJOI-FM        | 2                 |
| KJOI-AM        | 2                 |
| KNX-AM         | 2                 |
| KGO-AM         | 2                 |
| KMET-FM        | 2                 |
| KMPC-AM        | 2                 |

Newspapers

The most often read newspapers:

TABLE XXXIX

NEWSPAPERS

| <u>Newspaper</u>            | <u>% of Total</u> |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| Los Angeles Times           | 24                |
| San Francisco Chronicle     | 9                 |
| San Jose Mercury            | 4                 |
| Los Angeles Herald Examiner | 4                 |
| Sacramento Bee              | 4                 |
| San Diego Union             | 3                 |
| Orange County Register      | 3                 |
| San Diego Tribune           | 2                 |
| Wall Street Journal         | 2                 |
| USA Today                   | 2                 |
| Oakland Tribune             | 2                 |
| San Francisco Examiner      | 2                 |
| Daily News                  | 1                 |
| Daily Breeze                | 1                 |
| Fresno Bee                  | 1                 |
| Sacramento Union            | 1                 |

Early Evening Television News

TABLE XL

EARLY EVENING LOCAL NEWS VIEWED

| <u>Station</u>       | <u>% of Total</u> |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| KABC/ABC Los Angeles | 16                |
| KNXT/CBS Los Angeles | 12                |
| KNBC/NBC Los Angeles | 10                |
| KGO/ABC Bay Area     | 5                 |
| KRON/NBC Bay Area    | 4                 |
| KPIX/CBS Bay Area    | 4                 |
| KFMB/CBS San Diego   | 3                 |
| KCRA/NBC Sacramento  | 3                 |
| KGTV/ABC San Diego   | 2                 |
| KTVU Bay Area        | 1                 |
| KXTV/CBS Sacramento  | 1                 |
| KOVR/ABC Sacramento  | 1                 |

Late Night Television News

TABLE XIL

LATE NIGHT LOCAL TELEVISION NEWS

| <u>Station</u>       | <u>% of Total</u> |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| KABC/ABC Los Angeles | 12                |
| KNBC/NBC Los Angeles | 7                 |
| KNXT/CBS Los Angeles | 6                 |
| KTLA Los Angeles     | 4                 |
| KGO/ABC Bay Area     | 3                 |
| KCRA/NBC Sacramento  | 2                 |
| KRON/NBC Bay Area    | 2                 |
| KTUV Bay Area        | 2                 |
| KFMB/CBS San Diego   | 2                 |
| Channel 10 San Diego | 2                 |
| KTTV Los Angeles     | 2                 |
| KOVR/ABC Sacramento  | 2                 |
| KPIX/CBS Bay Area    | 1                 |



# CACC NEWS RELEASE

## CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES

2017 "O" Street • Sacramento, California 95814 • Telephone (916) 444-8641

Release Date: **Immediately**

Contact: RON HARRIS, Director of Information Services

**August 5, 1983**

### **SURVEY REVEALS CALIFORNIANS SUPPORT LOCAL CONTROL, INCREASED FUNDING FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGES**

The results of a recent statewide survey of 1,500 registered voters representative of all Californians, released today by the California Association of Community Colleges, revealed support among those interviewed for an increase in funding for California's community colleges. The survey, conducted by Larry Eastland & Associates, Inc., a Connecticut firm which specializes in governmental affairs polls, was conducted to determine how the citizens of California regard their community colleges.

The report, which highlights major findings from the Eastland firm's study, also provides strong evidence that California's voters support more local control over their community colleges, including how dollars are spent for programs and services.

Other highlights revealed by the survey include:

- Education tied with inflation as the third most frequently named important problem facing Californians today (behind unemployment and the State budget).
- Education was named as "the most important problem facing California today" by 50% more than those naming crime as the number one problem.

- Among households with unemployed persons, community college education to gain employment was viewed as a possibility by 2/3 of the respondents, and was seen by 1/3 as the most likely means to employment.
- Over 86% rated the community colleges as excellent to good on the quality of the job/career education they provide.
- Over 70% rated the community colleges as excellent to good on effective use of the money they receive to provide programs and services.
- The existing mission for the California community colleges was strongly supported by those surveyed.
- People plan to enroll in California's community colleges because they are viewed as providing education which is low in cost, high in quality, and the most accessible.
- 85% of those polled indicated they will enroll as a part-time student when next they attend classes at a California community college.
- 49% of the sample reported they had attended classes at a California community college. Of these:
  - \* 75% enrolled in courses related to employment or preparation for transfer.
  - \* Over 68% indicated it was "important" to them to receive academic credit for the courses in which they enrolled.
  - \* 60% enrolled as part-time students.

- Based on these responses, it appears to be overly simple to attempt to determine the seriousness of a student's education intent on the basis of their enrollment and attendance as a part-time rather than full-time student.

The survey was conducted to learn more about the views of California's registered voters toward their community colleges. A stratified random probability sample of 1,500 persons was drawn from the population. Major demographic characteristics were used as sample criteria. Respondents were selected from each California county to insure a broad-based study which reflected viewpoints of voters from all parts of the state.

A copy of the full highlights report is attached. Additional information about the survey is available from the California Association of Community Colleges at (916) 444-8641.

# # #

# CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES

DIRECTOR'S  
REPORT



## RESEARCH

(916) 444-8641

2017 "O" Street • Sacramento, California 95814

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### HIGHLIGHTS

#### COMMUNITY COLLEGE EDUCATIONAL STUDY OF REGISTERED VOTERS

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Study Conducted By:  
Larry Eastland & Associates, Inc.  
July, 1983

Report Prepared By:  
Peter M. Hirsch  
August, 1983

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### BACKGROUND

In order to learn more about the views of California's registered voters toward the California community colleges, the firm of Larry Eastland & Associates, Inc., which specializes in governmental affairs polls, was engaged to conduct a field survey. A stratified random probability sample of 1,500 persons to be interviewed was drawn from the population. Major demographic characteristics were used as sample criteria, with special emphasis on permanence of residence and gender. Respondents were proportionately selected from each California county to insure a broad-based study which reflected the viewpoints of voters from all parts of the State. Field work was accomplished in 13 interviewing days ending July 15, 1983. Standard telephone survey techniques were used to conduct the interviews.

### THE SAMPLE

Eighty-six percent (86%) had been residents of California for 10 years or more, 53% had their permanent residence located south of the Tehachapi Mountains, and 70% either owned or were in the process of purchasing their primary place of residence. Seventy-two percent (72%) had some college experience and 32% were college graduates. Median gross family income for 1982, as reported, was \$26,524; with approximately 9% reporting 1982 gross family incomes of under \$10,000 and an additional 9% reporting gross family incomes of \$50,000 or more. The median age of respondents in the sample was 43.3 years; 53% were women; 12.3% had an unemployed person living in their household at the time of the survey.

### RESPONDENT PARTICIPATION IN THE ELECTIVE POLITICAL PROCESS

Just over 42% identified themselves as Republicans, while just under 50% indicated they were Democrats. Over one-third of each aggregate considered themselves "strongly" Republican or Democrat. Although fewer of these voters identified themselves as leaning toward the Republican Party, for approximately every three who reported voting for Carter in the 1980 general election, five reported voting for Reagan. Eighty-seven percent (87%) reported voting in the 1980 general election and 88% reported voting in the 1982 state election.

For these respondents, political commitment involves more than voting. Forty-six percent (46%) reported having previously contributed money to a political cause or candidate, 30% reported having made contributions through the mail, and 26% reported having contributed money to either support or oppose a statewide ballot proposition.

### RATING CALIFORNIA AND ITS ECONOMY

When asked about the most important problems facing America, 46% of the sample cited factors related to the economy. Unemployment was first in the minds of these respondents with 24% naming it as the most important problem facing the Nation. This was followed by the general state of the economy as the second most cited problem area (16%), with "Inflation" (6%) emerging fourth in importance. Education ranked near the bottom of the list (2.5%) as did the Federal Budget (1.2%).

When asked the same question in relation to the State of California, a quite different profile emerged. Unemployment remained the most important problem and was named by 20% of the respondents. However, problems related to the State Budget emerged as the second most frequently named issue (19.3%), while concerns related to Education (9%) tied with Inflation (8.9%) as the third most frequently named important problem areas facing California.

FULLY 50% MORE OF THE SAMPLE CITED THE AREA OF EDUCATION AS THE "MOST IMPORTANT PROBLEM FACING CALIFORNIA TODAY" THAN CITED CRIME.

These views were supported by responses to a question which asked respondents if there was anything about California that "you don't like." State Budget issues were named by 7.1% of the respondents, Taxes and Tax Increases by 3.2%, Crime by 2.6% and Unemployment by 1.7%. Education and Money for Schools were named by 6.3% of the respondents--twice as many as cited Taxes and Tax Increases, over twice as many as cited Crime, and over three-times as many as named Unemployment.

This in spite of the fact that, overall, economic conditions at the state level were not viewed positively by the respondents. One-third of the sample rated economic conditions in California as "Average," while ratings of "Above Average" (23.1%) and "Below Average" (22.2%) balanced each other within the  $\pm 1\%$  error margin built into the sample design. In contrast, for every respondent who indicated economic

conditions in California were "Excellent" (2.5%), almost seven (16.8%) rated economic conditions in California as "Poor."

#### UNEMPLOYMENT AND CALIFORNIA'S COMMUNITY COLLEGES

One-hundred-seventy-nine respondents (11.9%) indicated they had at least one person currently living in their home "who is unemployed who previously had full-time employment." When asked why these persons were unemployed, 41.3% cited the general decline in the economy. Other factors, although named, were viewed as being considerably less important (e.g., disability [11.9%], to take care of children [4.4%], prejudice [3.1%]).

Job prospects in current skills areas were not viewed as favorable. Almost 60% of these respondents saw little likelihood that the persons would be employed "in the near future in his or her original profession or with his or her original company." Additionally, the majority of the formerly employed persons identified in the survey were reported to be considering furthering their education to acquire the new knowledge and skills necessary to getting a job.

TWICE AS MANY RESPONDENTS (34.5%) SAW NO CHANCE "AT ALL" OF REEMPLOYMENT IN THEIR ORIGINAL PROFESSION OR WITH THEIR FORMER EMPLOYER AS VIEWED THIS AS A "VERY LIKELY" POSSIBILITY (17%) FOR UNEMPLOYED PERSONS LIVING IN THEIR HOUSEHOLDS.

COMMUNITY COLLEGE EDUCATION TO ACQUIRE NEW JOB SKILLS IN ORDER TO GAIN EMPLOYMENT WAS VIEWED AS A POSSIBILITY BY TWO-THIRDS OF THESE RESPONDENTS, AND WAS VIEWED BY ONE-THIRD AS THE MOST LIKELY POSSIBILITY.

#### RATING CALIFORNIA'S COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Of the total sample, almost 80% rated the quality of education offered at a California community college as excellent to average when considered in conjunction with the UC and CSU systems. Comparable ratings for the UC and CSU systems were 85% and 83% respectively.

Several questions asked respondents to rate various characteristics of California's community colleges. Over 86% (1,408 expressing an opinion) rated the community colleges as excellent to good on the quality of the job/career education they provide, over 77% (1,341 expressing an opinion) rated the colleges similarly on the overall quality of the instruction they provide, and over 70% (1,275 expressing an opinion) rated the colleges performance in like fashion in terms of their effective use of the money they receive to provide programs and services.

IN TERMS OF QUALITY OF INSTRUCTION AND MANAGEMENT OF RESOURCES, CALIFORNIA'S COMMUNITY COLLEGES ARE HIGHLY REGARDED BY THE SURVEY RESPONDENTS.

An additional series of questions asked respondents to evaluate the appropriateness of various aspects of the current Mission for California's community colleges. These Mission Components are presented below in the order in which respondents indicated they were appropriate.

| Community College<br>Mission Component                                                           | Percent of Sample Evaluating<br>Component as Appropriate |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Job/Career Education                                                                          | 79.6%                                                    |
| 2. Basic Skills                                                                                  | 74.7%                                                    |
| 3. Education Which Prepares<br>Students To Transfer                                              | 72.9%                                                    |
| 4. General Education                                                                             | 70.5%                                                    |
| 5. Student Support Services                                                                      | 68.1%                                                    |
| -----                                                                                            |                                                          |
| 6. Opportunity For Life-Long<br>Learning                                                         | 66.2%                                                    |
| 7. Providing The Local Community<br>With Special Interest, Cultural<br>And Recreational Programs | 51.5%                                                    |

This assessment discloses several aspects of how the programs and services provided California's citizens through their community colleges are differentiated by the respondents.

First, they appear to distinguish between those components of the California Community College Mission which are more directly related to the attainment of specific learning goals and those which are more directly related to the general provision of learning opportunities. Second, those components of the existing mission which are most closely related to improving the likelihood of gaining employment are the most frequently viewed as appropriate. Third, although education which prepares students to transfer to a four-year college or university is viewed by almost three-fourths of the sample as appropriate to the Mission of the California Community Colleges, it is not preeminent in the minds of the respondents in the same way as it

has been in recent months among some governmental and state agency representatives.

Respondent approval for the several components of the California Community College Mission identified in the survey varied from a simple majority to almost four-out-of-five. In no instance did any of the mission components have a larger percentage of the respondents indicate the component was "not at all" appropriate than did indicate it was "very appropriate."

CLEARLY, THE FUNDAMENTAL COMPONENTS OF THE EXISTING MISSION FOR CALIFORNIA'S COMMUNITY COLLEGES ARE STRONGLY SUPPORTED BY THE RESPONDENTS.

One-hundred-forty-nine respondents had high school students in their households who at the time of the survey were planning to attend a California public postsecondary education institution. Of these, about half were planning to attend a community college while the others were approximately equally divided between the UC and CSU systems.

Asked why community college enrollment was planned, respondents verified findings disclosed by recent research.\* Thirty-nine percent (39%) named "Cost," 21% named "Good Basic Education," and 16% cited "Proximity To Home".

CITIZENS PLAN TO ENROLL IN CALIFORNIA'S COMMUNITY COLLEGES BECAUSE THEY PROVIDE EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES WHICH ARE LOW IN COST, HIGH IN QUALITY, AND ACCESSIBLE.

Forty-nine percent (49%) of the respondents reported having attended "classes at a community college in California." Of these respondents, 15% indicated they were currently enrolled at the time of the survey.

When asked about their area of study, 37.6% of the respondents who attended classes at a California community college indicated Liberal Arts programs as their primary area of study, 37.4% named occupational/career programs as their area of study emphasis, and 10.2% indicated their primary study focused on General Education.

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\* Nancy K. Renkiewicz, Peter M. Hirsch, Marshall E. Drummond, and Grace N. Mitchell, THE REVERSE TRANSFER STUDENT: AN EMERGING POPULATION, Los Rios Community College District, California Association of Community Colleges, Sacramento, California, October, 1982.

Nancy K. Renkiewicz, Peter M. Hirsch, and Marshall E. Drummond, "Transfers, It's a Two-Way Street," COMMUNITY AND JUNIOR COLLEGE JOURNAL, Washington, D.C., November 1982.

M. Steven Sheldon, and Clive L. Grafton, "Raison d'Etre: Students," COMMUNITY AND JUNIOR COLLEGE JOURNAL, Washington, D.C. November, 1982.

Additionally, 39% indicated the primary intent of their attendance was job-related; 25% attended with the primary intent of transferring to a four-year college or university.

Several additional survey questions asked respondents about the nature of their community college enrollment. Eighty-five percent (85%) of all respondents indicated that when in the future they were to attend classes at a California community college they would do so as a Part-Time student. Similarly, 60% of those respondents who reported having attended classes at a California community college did so as Part-Time students. Additionally, over 68% of these same respondents indicated it was "important" to them to have received academic credit for the courses in which they enrolled.

FIVE-SIXTHS OF THE SURVEY RESPONDENTS, WHEN NEXT THEY ATTEND CLASSES AT A CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE, WILL DO SO AS A PART-TIME STUDENT.

THREE-FOURTHS OF THE RESPONDENTS WHO ATTENDED A CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE ENROLLED IN COURSES RELATED TO EMPLOYMENT OR PREPARATION FOR TRANSFER.

TWO-THIRDS OF THE RESPONDENTS WHO ATTENDED A CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE INDICATED IT WAS "IMPORTANT" TO THEM TO RECEIVE ACADEMIC CREDIT FOR THE COURSES IN WHICH THEY ENROLLED.

THREE-FIFTHS OF THE RESPONDENTS WHO ATTENDED A CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE HAD ENROLLED AS PART-TIME STUDENTS.

BASED ON THESE RESPONSES, IT APPEARS IT MAY BE OVERLY SIMPLE TO ATTEMPT TO DETERMINE THE SERIOUSNESS OF A STUDENT'S EDUCATION INTENT ON THE BASIS OF THEIR ENROLLMENT AND ATTENDANCE AS A PART-TIME RATHER THAN FULL-TIME STUDENT.

#### HOW THE VOTERS SEE IT

##### A. LOCAL CONTROL

Four survey questions asked respondents to evaluate local control issues. Two of these focused on California's community colleges while the other two dealt with local control more generally.

- "There ought to be more local control over our community colleges and less interference from Sacramento." (1,372 expressing an opinion)

Over 80% of those responding strongly agreed or agreed with this statement. Additionally, for each respondent who strongly disagreed with the statement, nine respondents strongly agreed with the statement.

- "Overall, how important would you say it is to you to have community colleges in your area under the control of a locally elected board rather than by a statewide board appointed by the Governor? Would you say it is very important, important, not very important or not at all important?" (1,366 expressing an opinion)

Just under 80% of those responding indicated it was very important or important for California's community colleges in their area to be under the control of a locally elected board. For each respondent who indicated it was "not at all important" to have locally elected boards in control, over four respondents indicated it was "very important" to have locally elected boards in control.

- "Local city and county officials and school district governing boards should decide how their respective funds are spent on the various services which they provide rather than having local spending priorities determined by the state legislature." (1,344 expressing an opinion)

Again, just under 80% of those responding strongly agreed or agreed with this statement. For every two respondents who strongly disagreed with the statement, thirteen respondents strongly agreed with the statement.

- "Local cities, counties and school districts operate in a more cost effective manner than the state government." (1,267 expressing an opinion)

Sixty-nine percent (69%) of those responding strongly agreed or agreed with this statement. For each respondent who strongly disagreed with the statement, almost four respondents strongly agreed with the statement.

WITHOUT QUESTION, SURVEY RESPONDENTS SEE VALUE AND VALIDITY IN LOCAL CONTROL OF THE CORPORATE ENTITIES WHICH PROVIDE THEM PROGRAMS AND SERVICES.

OVER FOUR-FIFTHS OF THE RESPONDENTS INDICATED THERE SHOULD BE MORE LOCAL CONTROL OVER THEIR COMMUNITY COLLEGES.

ALMOST FOUR-FIFTHS OF THE RESPONDENTS INDICATED THE COMMUNITY COLLEGES IN THEIR AREA SHOULD BE UNDER THE CONTROL OF A LOCALLY ELECTED BOARD RATHER THAN A STATEWIDE BOARD APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNOR.

ALMOST FOUR-FIFTHS OF THE RESPONDENTS INDICATED LOCAL OFFICIALS AND GOVERNING BOARDS SHOULD DECIDE HOW THEIR FUNDS ARE SPENT TO PROVIDE SERVICES.

OVER TWO-THIRDS OF THE RESPONDENTS INDICATED LOCAL CORPORATE ENTITIES OPERATE MORE COST EFFECTIVELY THAN DOES STATE GOVERNMENT.

B. FUNDING FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Respondents were asked to evaluate current funding for California's community colleges. Specifically respondents were asked in varied order:

"...how adequate do you think the amount of money is that is currently being spent on the community colleges? Do you think too much is being spent, about the right amount is being spent or not enough is being spent?" (1,204 expressing an opinion)

Over 47% of those responding indicated "not enough is being spent," over 45% indicated "about the right amount is being spent," and about 7% indicated "too much is being spent." For each respondent who indicated that "too much is being spent," more than six respondents indicated "not enough is being spent."

CLEARLY, SURVEY RESPONDENTS INDICATED THERE SHOULD BE AN INCREASE IN FUNDING FOR CALIFORNIA'S COMMUNITY COLLEGES.

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